

**112<sup>th</sup> session of IOM Council – Council Panel on the launch of the World Migration Report 2022  
1 December 2021**

**Statement by IOM’s Deputy Director General for Operations, Ms Ugochi Daniels**

Good morning everyone, good morning colleagues, distinguished representatives. It is an absolute privilege to moderate this distinguished panel as part of the 112th session of the IOM Council on the new World Migration Report. The Director General and I are delighted to be joined by esteemed high-level colleagues from Member Sectors and the private sector. We are also delighted to be joined by Member States officials, IOM observer colleagues and IOM staff, both in person and virtually, via the online platform. Thank you for joining us today for this panel to launch the World Migration Report 2022.

This new edition of IOM's flagship report series is more important than ever before in the context of considerable uncertainty we have experienced for nearly two years now. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered immobility worldwide to an extent unseen in recent history slowing the pace of human mobility and migration. While the majority of people stay in their country of birth, that is, approximately 96.4 per cent of the world's population, the pandemic has estimated to negatively impacted the total growth of international migrants by 2 million. In other words, in 2020 there were 281million international migrants in the world rather than the expected 283 million.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the interconnections between migration and mobility. COVID-19 restrictions resulted in hundreds of millions of people being unable to travel for months on end with over 100 thousand international COVID-related travel restrictions imposed globally in the first year of the pandemic. Air passenger numbers dropped by 60 per cent in 2020 compared to 2019 from 4.5 billion to just 1.8 billion globally. As a result, many thousands of migrants were left stranded and in need of assistance.

Understanding migration was already challenging before the pandemic because of the complexity of migration as a multi-faceted phenomenon. However, since then it has been further exacerbated by misinformation and politization to alarming degrees with false information circulating on migrants as spreaders of the virus and in fact yesterday many representatives spoke about the issue of misinformation related to migrants.

At the same time, we have seen migrants on the front line in their destination countries around the world delivering essential services and supporting their families back home to cope with the economic impact of the pandemic by sending international remittances. The resilience of migrants' international remittances has defied predictions, remaining high in 2020 with just a 2.4 per cent decline globally and much less dire than the 20 per cent drop initially projected.

Last year international remittances totaled over 702 billion dollars, only slightly down from 719 billion in

2019. The central aim of our flagship World Migration Report is to set out in clear and accurate terms the changes occurring in migration and mobility globally so that readers can better situate their own work. Thanks to its high quality and its accessibility the World Migration Report maintains high relevance and utility for a diverse audience including Member States who use the report as a key tool for evidence-based policy development. For example, the report supports government officials to leverage the positive impacts of migration and best-policy practices for the benefit of sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination.

The central aim of the flagship World Migration Report is to set out in clear and accessible terms the changes occurring in migration and mobility globally so that readers can better situate their report. As the UN migration agency, IOM has an obligation to demystify the complexity and diversity of human mobility. The report acknowledges IOM's continuing obligation to uphold fundamental rights and its mission to support migrants who are most in need. This is particularly relevant in which IOM works to provide humanitarian assistance to people who have been displaced including by weather events, conflict and persecution or to those who have become stranded during crises such as COVID-19.

As set out in IOM's Constitution, migration research forms an integral part of the Organization's functions and IOM remains committed to supporting Member States as they draw upon data, research and analysis during policy formulation and review processes.

The World Migrations Report is a flagship component of this important area of our work. This new 2020 edition has again been produced in line with IOM's environment policy, not printing hard copies enables us to reduce the impact and the cost of paper consumption printing and transportation. The report is freely available online and shared with you today via USB keys that will also be sent out to regions that may face issues of Internet connectivity.

Extending the utility and reach of the flagship report reflects the evolution of the Organization's role and contribution to migration discourse globally. As we celebrate IOM's 70th anniversary and reflect on the ongoing need for IOM strong capabilities, it is worth recalled that IOM has been one of the longest standing supporters and producers of migration research and analysis. As highlighted in a recent article by our Director General IOM established the first scientific journal on international migration in 1961 and our World Migration Report series commenced more than two decades ago.

We are pleased to present to you esteemed colleagues the 11th edition of the report and now we are pleased and honoured to have a highly esteemed panel today for the report launch. In addition to the Director General joining us are the honourable Ms. Pholile Shakantu Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the Kingdom of Eswatini who is joining us virtually from Eswatini, the honourable Mr. Samuel Cikotic, Minister for Security from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Geissbühler of Switzerland and Ms Sandra Breka, CEO of the Robert Bosch Foundation. We look forward to hearing their insights, but first I would like to hand over to the Director General for his



overview of the new World Migration Report.

While he needs no introduction at all allow me to just briefly point to the DG's extensive service and public life and in migration. Mr. Vitorino has previously served as Deputy Prime Minister and as Minister of National Defence of Portugal. He served as European Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs from 1999 to 2004 and has extensive academic experience of more than two decades in the area of law. He was elected by IOM Member States to serve as Director General in June 2018 assuming the role in October of that year. Please Director General the floor is yours.